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ABSTRACT

This book describes the experiences of an inexperienced young teacher who, with the support of parents and teenagers in a Los Angeles (California) neighborhood, created a one-room schoolhouse and began to teach 30 gang members, ranging in age from 13 to nearly 20. He had no teaching credentials or college degree and the school had a tiny budget, but he and the community made a difference in the lives of these young men. The latter part of the book deals with his experiences with gangs in the Pima-Maricopa Indian Community on the Salt River Reservation in Arizona. Here the community takes collective responsibility for the problems of its young people. From these experiences lessons are drawn for others who are interested in working with gangs. The book is divided into four parts. From the experiences described in the first three parts, "Six Gang Members Teach Me that It Takes a Village," "Gathering the Children of the Gang," and "A Village School for the Children of the Gang," provide the material that is distilled in Part 4 into eight steps for a gang-free community. These are: (1) "The Community Affirms All Its Children"; (2) "The Children's Advocate and the Child-Raising Community"; (3) "Creating and Supporting Transformative Schools"; (4) "Parents as Partners, Not Patients"; (5) "Supporting Transitions between Institutions"; (6) "Identifying Disabilities"; (7) "Something To Care about and Take Pride In"; and (8) "Promoting Recovery from Addictions." (SLD)

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